

**ABSENTEEISM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SIAYA DISTRICT, KENYA
(A CASE STUDY OF AGULU PRIMARY SCHOOL,
BORO DIVISION)**

PRESENTED BY

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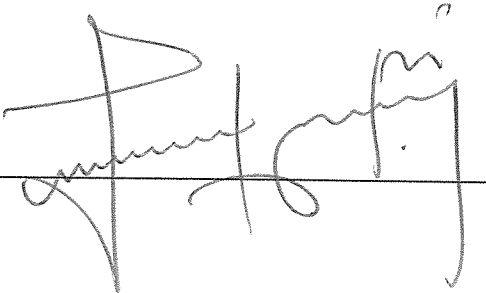
**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE IN
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL NEEDS
AT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTINUING
AND DISTANCE STUDIES OF
KAMPALAINTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

NOVEMBER 2008

DECLARATION


(a) Candidate

I, **Wanyang O. Peter** do hereby declare that *Absenteeism and Academic Performance of Selected Primary Schools in Siaya District, Kenya*, is my original work, except where acknowledged and that it has not been submitted before to any other University or Institution of Higher Learning for the award of a Degree.

Signed  Date 23/08/08

(b) Supervisor's

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's University Supervisor.

Name of Supervisor: 
Signed _____ Date 23rd/08/08

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- Mr. Tindi Seje, Lecturer – Kampala International University.
- Madam Zahara Kiggundu, Lecturer – Kampala International University.
- Jerry, Philemon and William, my sons.
- Phoebe Mercy – My wife.
- Mr. George Ogelo Aduol, Headteacher – Agulu Primary School
- Mr. Kennedy Otieno – Principal Mulaha Secondary School.
- All others not mentioned but who contributed significantly are also acknowledged.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS.

1. Absenteeism: The habit of not being at school or work when you should be, usually without good reason.
2. Administration: The activity involved in or the people responsible for the managing an organization or activity.
3. Aesthetic: To do with beauty or artistic.
4. Behavior Problem: Behavior is the way someone behaves. Behavior problems describes having difficulty with behaving in the expected manner.
5. Cognitive: Retaining to the mental ability.
6. Curriculum: A course of study.
7. Demographic: Statistics of a person, social in nature.
8. Exceptional Children: These are children who deviate from the normal children in mental characteristics, social or emotional behavior, communication abilities or multiple handicaps to such an extent that they require modification in school practice or special educational services in order to develop their maximum capacity.
9. Figure: A combination of lines and points illustrating a condition or relation.
10. Graph: A diagram indicating any sort of relationship between two or more things by means of lines.
11. Hypothesis: A set of assumptions, accepted as a basis for reasoning or investigation.
12. Inclusive Education: This is an educational policy in Kenya which advocates that learn of all categories, regardless of their special Needs should be enrolled in the mainstream schools.
13. Insolence: The quality of being proud or naughty towards others in an offensive manner.
14. Kenya Certificate of Primary Education-(K.C.PE) Examination: An exam administered to pupils who have completed their eight year study in primary school.
15. Massive: Constituting a large extent, having considerable magnitude.
16. Personnel: The persons employed or working in an institution of learning.
17. Pilot study: Pre-study before the actual study is undertaken.
18. Policy: A course or a plan of action especially administrative in nature.
19. Prevalence: The extent or frequency of occurrence.
20. Profile: A short biographical sketch of a person.

ABSTRACT

This research document contains a total of Five chapters. The chapters are preceded by the Preliminary pages which act as instruction to the research work. The title talks about absenteeism and academic performance of selected pupils of Agulu Primary School, which is a case study school representing other schools in Siaya District. A declaration has been made stating that the work is original and completely belongs to the undersigned.

Acknowledgements have been made to various personalities who have contributed to the success of this project. The next section has the table of contents followed by the list of figures and tables. A brief definition of terms has been included as the last part of the preliminary pages.

Chapter one contains the Introduction part of the work. The researcher has given the background of the work, a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, scope and finally significance of the study where the beneficiaries of the findings have been outlined.

In chapter two, important literary works by various scholars touching on absenteeism have been discussed. The major issues discussed here include the causes, the results and the solutions to absenteeism as viewed by these scholars.

Chapter three contains the methodology. Here research design, sampling procedure, instruments and procedure used in the research process has been discussed. Data analysis methods have also been discussed in this chapter.

The next Chapter (4) contains the major findings from the research field based on the objectives of research. The final Chapter of this work (5) contains the discussions conclusions and recommendations all based on the research findings.

A list of books quoted has been appended in the reference section alongside other tools employed in the research process.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, background information of the study is given. Statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, scope and significance of the study is discussed.

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many scholars have attested to the fact that in an educational set up there are a number of challenges that are met by educators which must be addressed so that the laid down objectives are clearly met.

According to Patel (2001), Education is a dynamic process; it is never rigid, so in the field of education, a number of problems arise at every moment. Persons involved in education have to make a number of decisions at every step in order to solve these problems.

It is important to note that any decision relating to improvement of academic standards or solving problems such as absenteeism or truancy should never be procrastinated (Patel 2001). All decisions should be treated with the seriousness that they deserve to stop academic standards of any society from dwindling to irreparable levels.

The Siaya District Evaluation Committee in their 2007 academic report highlighted a number of issues affecting standards of education in the District. Many Institutions of learning have witnessed the academic standards of pupils going down by failing to identify and address the causes of such occurrences.

Such schools may be characterized by administrators who are sluggish in decision making, poor problem finding mechanism, poor school rules, and chronic absenteeism, not only by pupils but also by teachers, lateness in attending school programmes, truancy, classroom related problems like noisemaking, poor school infrastructure and dilapidated educational resources, blame shifting from one stakeholder to another and worst of all, physical confrontation among senior stakeholders (Patel 2001).

A good administration should address issues promptly. Any issue that affects academic performance should give an effective teacher sleepless nights.

1.2: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Agulu Primary School is one of the schools in Siaya District. In 2006, the school presented a total number of fifteen candidates for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examinations. In January 2007, when the results came out, only seven managed to score above the pass mark of 250 out of the possible 500 marks. Some of the pupils who did not attain the pass mark had, during their study, learning and revision period, had cases with their subject teachers and the school administration ranging from truancy to absenteeism.

In recent years (2003, 2004 and 2005) the school committee and other senior stakeholders had always raised concern about academic performance of the pupils in the school, with parents pointing accusing fingers at the school administration and teachers. The teachers on the other hand have always directed theirs at the parents and the local community.

Poor performance of the girl child heightened the trading of accusations between the parents and the teachers in the years 2005 and 2006. In standard five, only eight out of forty pupils scored 250 marks and above out of 500 in the end year exams. Out of this number only two were girls. In standard six, only six pupils out of forty six scored two hundred and fifty marks and above out of five hundred marks. Out of this number, only one was a girl.

Although the school administration managed to 'fix' the issues as they arose, they seemed to affect academic programmes.

Finally, during one of the school P.T.A meetings, those present were made to believe that the school's poor performance was attributed to bad omen caused by a standard seven pupil who committed suicide within the school compound some years ago. This was a rather superstitious view and it was resolved that a bull would be slaughtered to cast away the evil spirits from the pupil's academics and the school as a whole. But still, there was no change.

All the above were attempts to find a solution to a major issue; Poor academic performance in Agulu Primary school.

As a Special Needs Education (S.N.E) Teacher within the school, the researcher felt the challenge to be in the forefront of doing a research to find if there could be any significant relationship between the individual pupils behaviour especially absenteeism and their corresponding academic performances with an aim of forwarding the findings to the newly posted headteacher.

Possible recommendations from the research findings on how to improve academic performance of the school would bring peace and harmony among the stakeholders namely the parents, teachers, the committee and the school administration.

1.3: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.

The purpose of the study was to find out if there is any significant relationship between absenteeism and academic performance of pupils of Agulu Primary schools in Siaya District, Kenya.

This research was done based on the assumption that;

“There is no significant relationship between Absenteeism and academic performance of pupils of Agulu Primary School in Siaya District.”

1.4: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

The main objectives of the research were to;

- 1.4.0: Find out if selected pupils in the school absent themselves
- 1.4.1: Assess the main causes of absenteeism of pupils of Agulu Primary School.
- 1.4.2: Examine the effects of absenteeism of pupils in Agulu Primary School.
- 1.4.3: Identify solutions to the problem of absenteeism in Agulu Primary School.

1.5: SCOPE.

The research was a case study of Agulu Primary School which is about 10 kilometers North of Siaya Town. This school represented the remaining schools in the district. The major issue was absenteeism and academic performance of students in Agulu Primary School. Basically, the research was based on the assumption that a child who does not absent himself from school will tend to perform well in academics.

1.6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

In section 1.2 , the researcher stated that in the recent years; there had been a lot of misunderstandings among the various stakeholders in Agulu Primary School concerning academic performance of the learners. The finding of the research has suggested possible solution for implementation by the stakeholders.

The findings of the research has opened door to many educationists on possible solutions to various problems that affect the quality of academic performance. The Ministry of Education curriculum specialists could use the findings in designing the curriculum to suit the needs of the current trends in Education especially in this era when the government is attempting to implement inclusive education.

It is the joy of any society when solutions to their problems are unearthed. Parents and the local community of Agulu Primary School will finally count it joy if recommendations of the research are implemented and their children begin pass exams with flying colours in successive examinations especially in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E). The parents will be able to rid themselves of the superstitious beliefs that has hindered them from supporting the teachers in implementing the school's academic programmes.

The head teacher of Agulu Primary School will use the recommendations to lay strategies for helping pupils to improve in their academic performance and that of the school as a whole. The findings will also help him to reconcile the parents and the teachers.

1.7 REVIEW

In this chapter the researcher discussed the background, purpose, scope and significance of the study among others. In the next chapter, the various literary works by various scholars will be reviewed in line with the title of study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.0 OVERVIEW

In this chapter absenteeism will be discussed besides other behavioural problems prevalent among students in any setting. Possible solutions have also been discussed.

2.1 ABSENTEEISM – ITS NATURE AND SCOPE IN EDUCATION

According to Ndurumo (1993) the prevalence of children with emotional and behavior problems varies from one country to another and even from one region to another within a country. Various factors contribute to the complexity of determining the prevalence. These include the perception among different persons and cultures as to what constitute behavior problems. The prevalence of learners with emotional and behavioral problems in Kenya at 1.0% by 1985 translating to 45,650 learners aged between 4-15 years.

Quay et al (1986) quoted by Ndurumo analyzed teachers responses to 441 children in classes for the emotionally disturbed. He found that the children exhibited behaviors that could be classified into three categories.

The first category was termed as having conduct problems. Children in this category were defiant, irritable, impertinent and boisterous.

The second category was termed as being inadequacy-immaturity. Children in this category were described as lazy, disliked school[absenteeism], were sluggish and had poor attention. The third category was classified as having personality problems. Children in this category were self conscious, felt inadequate, inferior, fearful, shy, anxious, and depressed. Children in these categories exhibited conduct disorders, such as disobedience, disruptiveness, irresponsibility, noise making in class, absenteeism, jealousy and social withdrawal from others and authority.

DATE	PUPIL'S NAME	SEX	AGE	CLASS	OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT	GIVEN BY WHOM	HEAD TEACHER'S REMARK
2/79	Susanna	F	13	7	Refused to Obey Miss Lakam who told her to leave classroom. for insolence	Apologized to Miss Lakam punished by mother		This action taken because of repeated instance
7/9	Kaka	M	12		Missed school on Monday without Permission	6 strokes of the cane	Headmaster	

Here below find two important records (Farrant 1980) the punishment book and pupils' report card.

The punishment book (figure 2.1)

The above records are examples of tools that can be used to control the learning process and predict pupil's behavior like absenteeism. According to John Dewey, a progressive educator, quoted by Kochhor, "those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities." Education is the deliberate systematic influence exerted by the mature person upon the immature through instruction, discipline and harmonious development of physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual powers of then human being, according to individual and social needs and directed towards the union of the educator with his creator as the final end. This calls for improvement of school room practices, making learning a more powerful process.

However there are issues that threaten the above process. According to M.P. Sadker and D.M. Sadker (2002); By the 1980's and 1990's teachers were sounding an alarm bell about absenteeism, unmet psychological, emotional and social needs of the nations Children, concerns about effective

student needs that continue today. By 1990's, 76 percent of teachers were concerned about students' drinking, 64 percent were concerned about drug use, 59 percent about teenage pregnancy and 34 percent about absenteeism.

Absenteeism has continued to affect the performance of many learners in schools today. While the learner is away; learning is normally in progress making it difficult for such learners to cope with the academic pressure.

According to the Core Module (2001) the attendance register is a legal evidence of pupils' attendance of learning sessions. It helps in checking absenteeism among learners. A teacher is expected to keep the attendance of the pupils as per the regulations of the Ministry of Education. A teacher should mark the register neatly in blue and red or black and red. The register should be marked twice a day, in the morning and in the beginning of the afternoon session.

Igaroga (1996) suggested ways of marking the register. "You may have pupils rise up their hands when called to indicate that they are present or you may give the pupils an assignment that is to begin as soon as they enter. After the work is underway, you can take the attendance that is usually scanning the room so that they do not need to call names. This approach takes little time and allows pupils to move quickly into their academic work. Other important record includes pupil's records, progress records, group work records and duty roster records.

According to Farrant (1980) the purpose of the records is to protect the learner from unreasonable punishment from teachers and to protect teachers from unwarranted criticism by parents or others resulting from exaggerated reports of punishment given. They can only do this faithfully kept. If well kept, records can be used to check on the past behavior of a difficult child and the offence to which he is prone. This might provide a lead to discovering the root cause of his problem especially absenteeism or truancy. Records also help ignorant parents have a better understanding of the school and the child's place in the school.

One of the major solutions fronted by Ndurumo (1993) to absenteeism is parental involvement. If a parent is involved in handling their children's absenteeism cases, the problem normally seems to reduce significantly. He finally notes that a good teacher should endeavor to give the learner remedial work especially if he or she absented himself with permission.

2.3 REVIEW

In this chapter the nature and scope of absenteeism was discussed and finally possible solutions were stated according to scholars. In the next chapter, various aspects of methodology employed will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

3.0 OVERVIEW

In this chapter research design, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedure and the method used to analyses data will be discussed.

3.1: DESIGN.

This research employed case study to determine if there is any significance relationship between absenteeism and academic performance of selected pupils of Agulu Primary School in Siaya District, Kenya.

3.2: ENVIRONMENT.

This study was conducted at Agulu Primary School in Siaya District, Kenya.

3.3: RESPONDENTS

The respondents of the study were pupils of Agulu Primary School. The school had a population of four hundred and ten pupils.

3.4: SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Through purposive sampling method, a total of twenty four respondents (pupils) were sampled from six classes that is class three to eight.

Out of the four pupils per class, two were purposively girls while two were boys. The four were chosen based on their previous academic performance. The best two pupils and the worst two pupils per class were chosen randomly.

3.5: INSTRUMENTS.

The researcher employed an interview guide throughout the process.



3.6: DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher used the following procedure in the process of data collection.

a) **Development of research instruments/ tools**

This was the first step in the whole process. The researcher prepared an interview guide.

b) **Pre-testing the instrument/ pilot study**

To ascertain the affectivity of the tool, researcher employed the interview guide on a pilot scheme to get feedback on the same.

c) **Adjusting the instrument**

After pre-testing the instrument, the research readjusted the interview guide appropriately to suit the need of the whole data collection period.

d) **Getting permission to conduct research**

The researcher sought permission from the relevant authority to conduct research.

e) **Collecting Data**

Once permission was acquired, the researcher will proceeded to collect the data using the tools from the sampled population.

f) **Presentation and organization of data**

Once collected, the data was organized effectively using various techniques of data presentation. While some aspects were presented quantitatively using figures/ charts, some aspects were presented qualitatively in descriptive forms.

g) **Analysis of the data**

A thorough analysis of the data was done by the researcher in line with the objectives so that a proper conclusion was arrived at.

3.7 REVIEW

In this chapter we have discussed the methodology aspects of the research process. In the next chapter, the findings of the research is presented. In the next chapter, the research findings from the field will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR.: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0: OVERVIEW

In this chapter the researcher will present the findings from the respondents based on the Interview Guide.

4.1: RESEACH FINDINGS BASED ON THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

The respondents were required to state the causes of absenteeism from the respondents. The researcher selected 24 respondents and a good number gave similar answers related to the questions posed.

On the question- Why was the respondent absent from school?

Many respondents gave the following answers:

- Seeking to medication
- Looking for school funds / learning materials.
- Taking care of the siblings while the parent/ guardians are awy.
- Attending relative's funerals.

On the question – What were the consequences of the respondents absenteeism?

A good number of respondents gave the following responses:

- Missing important topics in class.
- Missing examinations
- Being compelled to grilling by teachers
- Low confidence while attending to academic matters.

The tables below summarize the major findings from the research:

TABLE 4.1: MAJOR CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM IN THE SCHOOL.

NO.	CAUSES RAISED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
1	Seeking medication	4
2	Looking for school funds	18
3	Taking care of siblings	12
4	Attending funeral of relatives.	20
	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	24

TABLE 4.2: MAJOR EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM.

NO.	EFFECTS RAISED BY RESPONDENTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
1	Missing important topics	22
2	Missing Examination	22
3	Grilling by teachers	24
4	Low confidence in academics	16
5	suspension	2
	TOTAL RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED	24

TABLE 4.3: MAJOR SOLUTIONS TO ABSENTEEISM.

NO.	SOLUTIONS RAISED BY RESPONDENTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
1	Seeking permission from school	20
2	Starting income generating projects	16
3	Attending funerals during holidays	16
4	Seeking funds from NGO's/ Govt.	20
5	Sensitizing parents against absenteeism	18
6	Doing relevant work at home	22
	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	24

4.2 REVIEW

In this chapter, the major findings of the research were presented in a very clear manner. In the next chapter, these findings are going to be discussed in detail and conclusions drawn.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

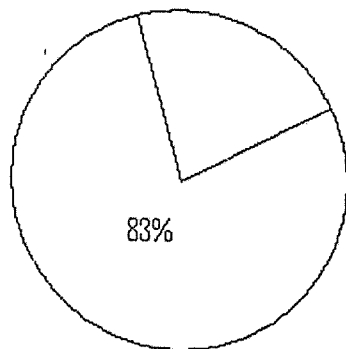
5.0: OVERVIEW

In the previous chapter the researcher presents the major findings from the field. In this chapter the researcher will give a detailed discussions of the findings, make conclusions and recommendations which hopefully will be used by stake holders to improve academic standards in the District.

5.1: DISCUSSIONS

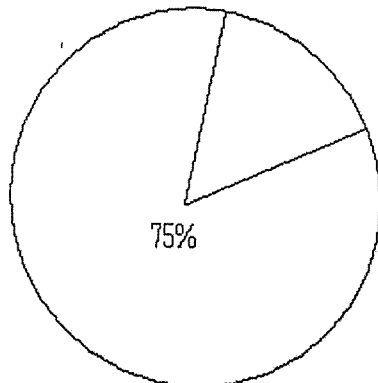
a). On the questions on the causes of absenteeism among pupils twenty respondents out of twenty four attended funerals of relatives. This accounted for 83% in the pie chart below.

Figure 5.1 Percentage of Respondents who absent themselves due to attending Funerals



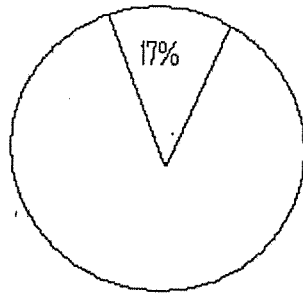
Eighteen out of 24 respondents cited looking for school funds and learning resources as their reason for absenteeism. This represented 75% of the respondents as illustrated in the pie chart below.

Figure 5.1 Absentees Due to Lack of Funds



However, only four out of twenty four respondents were absentees due to attending to medication representing only 17% of the respondents as illustrated below.

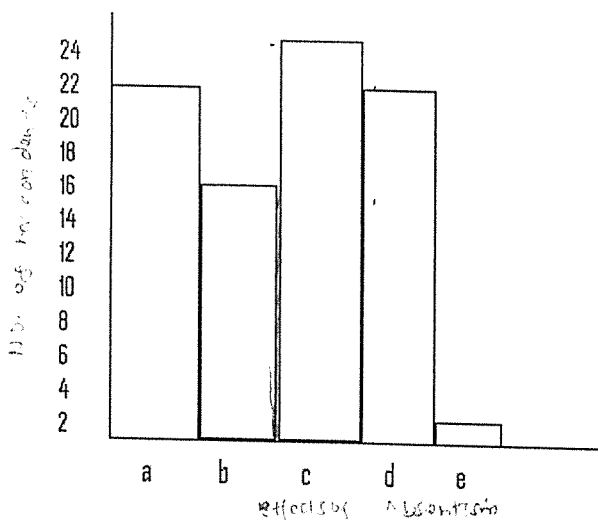
Figure 2 Absentees Due to Medical Cases



b). Effects of absenteeism.

The following bar graphs represent the respondents' views on the effects of absenteeism.

Figure 5.6 Graph showing the number of respondents against the effects of absenteeism



Effects of Absenteeism.

Key:

- a) Missing topics
- b) Low confidence in academics
- c) Grilling by teachers
- d) Missing examinations
- e) Suspensions.

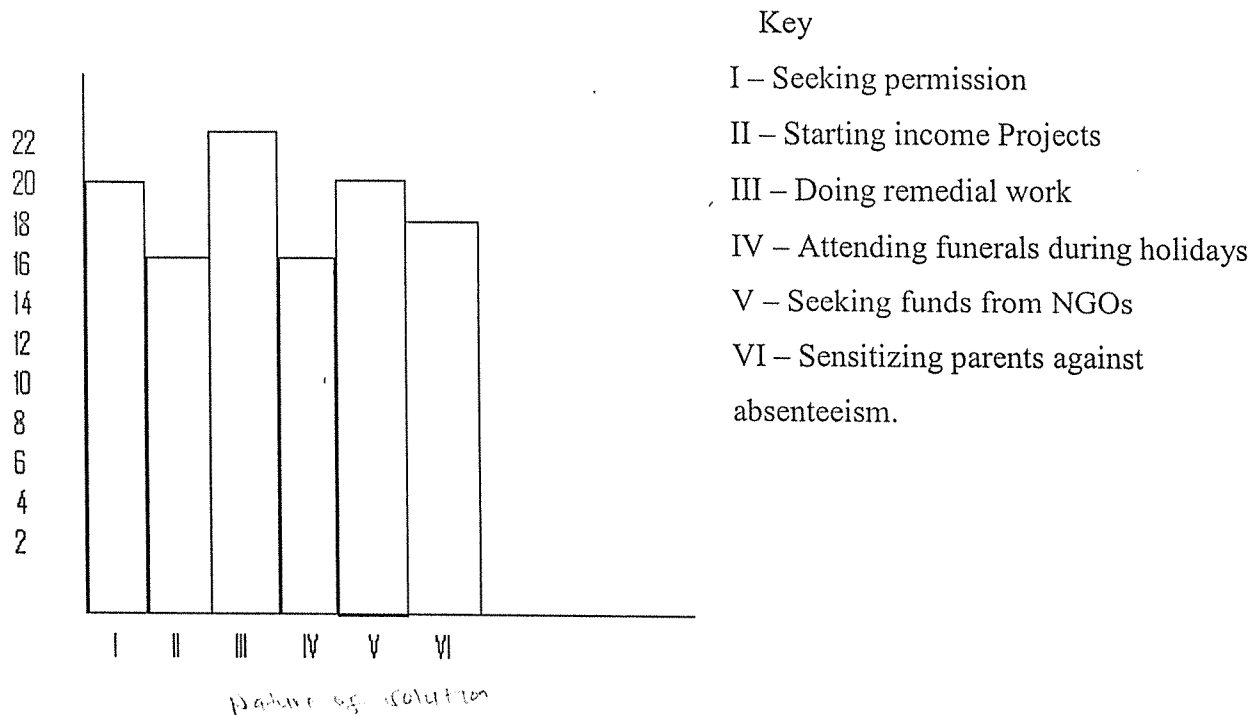
c) Solutions to absenteeism

ALL respondents felt that it is important to seek permission if one had to be absent from school. 16 out of 24 respondents felt that schools and individual students should start income generating projects to generate funds for buying school resources.

22 out of 24 respondents saw the need to do remedial work as one of the solutions to absenteeism.

Some respondents felt that their guardians should sensitize to avoid converting their school going children into cheap labour at home during school days. The graph below summarizes the respondents' solutions in absenteeism

Figure 3.6 Graph Showing number of respondents against the nature of solutions.



5.2: CONCLUSIONS.

The following are the major issues which emerged from the field, most of which have been discussed by many scholars including Farrant (2002)

- Absenteeism is a common problem in Agulu Primary School and many schools in Siaya District.
- The major causes of absenteeism include pupils looking for funds and other school resources, pupils attending to social issues on behalf of their parents and attending pupils attending funerals. Seeking medical attention was also an issue raised.
- Some of the major effects of absenteeism were learners missing exams and class work, grilling by teachers and low self confidence and esteem from the learner.
- Parental involvement and government increase of allocations to schools were major solutions cited.

5.3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher gives the following recommendations:-

- That guidance and counseling should be done in schools for both students and parents to control absenteeism.
- That the government should increase allocation to schools to cater for all the spheres of life of a student including examinations.
- That the teachers should Endeavour to provide remedial work for learners who unavoidably become absent.

5.4: REVIEW.

In this chapter the researcher looked at the major findings of the research. Besides, the researcher explicitly drew conclusions based on the findings and finally recommended a few issues that would help scholars yearning to improve the academic standards of students in any setting not only in Siaya District, but also globally.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Name _____ Class _____
Boy ☐ Girl ☐
2. Position of respondent
Term I _____ Term II _____ Term III _____
3. Was respondent absent from school:
In term I _____ how many times _____
In term II _____ how many times _____
In term III _____ how many times _____
4. Why respondent was absent from school
In term I _____
In term II _____
In term III _____
5. What were the consequences of the respondents' absenteeism?
In term I _____
In term II _____
In term III _____
6. According to the respondent, what could help him/her to attend school regularly?

7. Any other comment

PETER. O. WANYANG'
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
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KAMPALA
10TH MARCH 2008.

THE HEAD TEACHER,
AGULU PRIMARY SCHOOL,
P.O. BOX 413,
SIAYA.

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH.

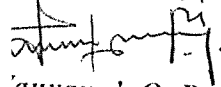
I shall be graduating in November 2008 from Kampala International University with a Bachelor's Degree in Special Needs Education.

As a requirement for the above, I have to undertake research and present by dissertation to the above University.

This letter is therefore meant to seek your permission to undertake this noble project in your highly esteemed institution commencing September 2007.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,



'anyang'.O. Peter.

RESEARCHER.

Noted by:

1. Mr. Geoffrey Kasosi
Ass Director, Academics, ICDS. Area.
2. My Research Supervisor

AGULU PRIMARY SCHOOL

P. O. BOX 13
SIAYA

DATE: 10TH April 2008

Mr. Peter Wanyang'
Research Student
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P. O. Box 20000
Kampala

Dear Sir,


RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

We received your letter requesting to undertake research in our school.

You have been allowed to do so. Kindly ensure that you practice maximum ethical standards while in the process.

We wish you the best in your endeavours.

Yours faithfully,


George O. Oduol
Headteacher.

